



# News Release

## IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

The Idaho Water Center, 322 E. Front St., Boise, ID - TEL: (208) 287-4800 FAX: (208) 287-6700

[www.idwr.idaho.gov](http://www.idwr.idaho.gov)

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For Media Information Contact:  
Bob McLaughlin – 208-287-4828

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### **Water Supply Committee: Reservoir Storage Mitigates Impacts of Reduced Streams Flows**

Warm and dry conditions in March removed all hopes of a near normal runoff season in 2007 in many Idaho river basins according information presented at the seasons final Idaho Water Supply Committee meeting on Thursday. Water users without the benefit of above normal reservoir storage carried over from last year will see much lower spring and summer streamflows this season.

The month of March saw sharp declines in snowpack from February of 10 to 30 percent. The unusually warm temperatures in March caused snowmelt to begin and streams to rise early, something that normally starts in April. Many basins showed a net overall decrease in snow water content from March 1<sup>st</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup>. This is extremely rare in the higher elevation basins, and has occurred only a few times in the previous 40 years. April 1<sup>st</sup> is normally the peak of the snow accumulation season. This followed on the heels of an unusually dry January.

Despite the lack of precipitation the majority of Idaho reservoirs are expected to fill to 100% of capacity or come close. But with the lack of snow and runoff this year, most reservoirs will drain by summer's end and will make water users highly dependent on ample snowpacks next year. In most parts of the state, March is the forth month out of the last six with below normal precipitation during this water year which began on October 1<sup>st</sup>.

**(more)**

Even if normal precipitation occurs during the next several months, natural stream flows will likely be below normal through spring and summer. National Weather Service Climate Prediction Center long range outlooks indicate a higher probability of Idaho experiencing above normal temperatures and near normal precipitation from late April through June.

The Water Supply Committee is made up of hydrologists, meteorologists, and water managers from both the public and private sectors. Members each contribute data throughout the water year beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> to formulate a comprehensive water supply outlook for 2007.

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